1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

water from the domestic pond or well and carry manure in reed baskets to the fields.

The sexes are generally segregated. The outer veranda serves as a club for the men, and they sit down on the benches there, drinking, chewing betel, and talking. The women rarely visit the veranda.[1] Similarly, men rarely join the women who are all presumably sitting in the kitchen, or in one of the inner rooms. Men and women dine separately, the women dining after the men.

When relatives visit a Coorg house, the men guests join the men hosts in the veranda, whereas the women guests join the women hosts in an inner part of the house. During the harvest festival and festival of the village-deities the men sing and dance while the women watch them from a distance. Usually the men play a more active part in the festivals than the women. There is an oracle in the festival of every village-deity, and the oracles are usually men. Women oracles are indeed rare, but where they function they are important.

Women are expected to observe a stricter code of conduct than men. For instance, formerly, a Coorg woman who had committed adultery with a low-caste man was summarily thrown out of caste, whereas a lapse on the part of a man was not treated with equal seriousness. Again, there was some difference in the punishment meted out to a man and woman: a man was liable to be fined or excommunicated, whereas excommunication was the only punishment for a woman.

Different ideals are held up for men and women. Strength, skill in fighting and hunting, and courage are admired in a man. A proverb states, 'men should die on the battlefield, and women should die in child-bed'. The killer of a tiger or panther and mother of ten children were both accorded the honour of a *mangala* ceremony. (See Chapter III.)

Formerly women seem to have enjoyed greater freedom than they do nowadays. Elderly informants remember that even as recently as fifty years ago women used to sing and beat cymbals in public on festive occasions. Coorg folksongs tell us of women who killed tigers and held assemblies of men to ridicule. In some folk-

[1] Frequently a Coorg house has a separate entrance which enables the women to move in and out of the house without being seen by the men who are gathered in the veranda.

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

returned to his village and gave a feast to the headmen and villagers. This completed his readmission to society.

The man who commits an offence against the moral code of the community is treated as an extremely impure person; and the purificatory rites which he performs before being readmitted to society are the same as those which first-grade mourners perform before attaining normal ritual status. An offence against the ethical code results in pollution, a fact which makes clear to everyone the nature of the offence. Such an offence also angers the ancestors and deities.

When a person was, however, guilty of a very great offence against the caste code, like adultery or fornication with someone belonging to a very low caste, the offender was irrevocably excommunicated. Moegling mentions[1] the case of a Coorg woman who was guilty of adultery with a man belonging to one of the Untouchable castes and who was consequently thrown out of the caste irrevocably. She was forced to live among Untouchables. Finally, both she and her Coorg husband, who was personally ready to forgive her, became converts to Christianity.

A person guilty of the offence mentioned above was considered as good as dead, and the rite of excommunication was called, appropriately enough '*kōḍi kittuvudu*' or 'tearing the cloth'. The offender and his relatives held a hemmed cloth, such as the one used by Coorgs for tying round the head, between them, and this was torn in two. Thereafter the offender ceased to exist for them. Even his son was not bound to maintain him while alive or perform funeral rites after his death.

XIV

A *nāḍ* is a bigger unit than a village, and it is usually more homogeneous culturally than a larger area which includes it and a few other *nāḍs*. The differences between *nāḍs* are considerable if we compare geographically extreme instances like Kiggaṭnāḍ and Nālknāḍ, but even if we take two neighbouring *nāḍs* they are bound to differ in certain respects, differences in matters of detail which might appear unimportant to the outsider, but which appear as extremely important to the inhabitants of the *nāḍs* in question. In fact, each *nāḍ* sees the points in which it differs from its neighbours

[1] Op. cit., pp. 213–14.

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

692 Panchâyat lay to the Párapatiagár or to the Devân's Kacheri. The Párapatiagár settled at his own responsibility or through a Panchâyat cases of small amount which, however, remained undefined.

685 When *theft* was committed in a village, the Gauda with the ryots exerted themselves to catch the thief and on apprehension carried him to the Párapatiagár's Kacheri, where an enquiry was made, the stolen property, if possible, recovered and restored to the owner with an award of half the value of the stolen property as a punishment of the thief. In default 681 of payment, he was flogged or sentenced to work on the roads. 565 *Corporal punishment* was not restricted to any class of crime or people; even Devâns, who had incurred the displeasure of the Rájahs, were subjected to the last, some times swung by the royal hand!

682 In *murder cases*, the Párapatiagárs and the Subadár of the district committed the criminal for trial to the Huzur, the 692 officials of which, under orders from the Rájah, examined the prisoner and reported the result. According to circumstances the murderer would be pardoned, fined, whipped, mutilated • 684 or executed, agreeably to the Rájah's orders. In *cases of adultery* the guilty parties were severely and barbarously punished. *Manslaughter* committed in a state of intoxication 682 or during hunting or whilst guarding the crops against wild beasts, was leniently dealt with, especially if the unfortunate man reported the accident voluntarily before the Huzur had been informed of it. *Eloping from the country* and *treasonable* 684 687 *acts against the Sirkar* were considered as the most heinous crimes, and the culprit, if caught, seldom escaped capital punishment, dictated with a savage vindictiveness. Of the 696 nature of these punishments it is difficult to credit the stories, that are told of their frequency and ferocity. The ordinary ones are said to have been: crushing to death by elephants, strangulation or decapitation by the large Coorg knife, a most